



**Open Pathway**  
*Quality Initiative Institutional Report Template*

The enclosed Quality Initiative report represents the work that the institution has undertaken to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.

*E. Kaler*

*8/31/15*

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date

Eric W. Kaler, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Name of Institution

Minneapolis, MN

City and State

The institution uses the template below to complete its Quality Initiative Report. The institution may include a report it has prepared for other purposes if it addresses many of the questions below and replaces portions of the narrative in the template. This template may be used both for reports on initiatives that have been completed and for initiatives that will continue and for which this report serves as a milestone of accomplishments thus far. The complete report should be no more than 6,000 words.

**Date:** August 31, 2015

**Name of Institution:** University of Minnesota Twin Cities

**State:** Minnesota

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**Indicate one of the following:**      would like a letter of consultation  
    does not want a letter of consultation

**Report Categories:**                      Final report of a completed initiative  
    Milestone report of accomplishments thus far in a continuing initiative

## **Overview of the Quality Initiative**

1. *Provide a one-page executive summary that describes the Quality Initiative, summarizes what has been accomplished, and explains any changes made to the initiative over the time period.*

Even with our condensed timeline, due to the fact that we entered the Open Pathways cycle in year 9, we feel that we have made considerable progress in reinvigorating our undergraduate education assessment efforts through the work that we have done as part of our *Quality Initiative*. Our *Quality Initiative* sought to:

1. Reaffirm assessment of undergraduate student learning as a campus- and program-level priority.
2. Formalize current program-level efforts into a more consistent process that still allows colleges or programs the flexibility to tailor efforts to their disciplines and unique needs.
3. Connect program-level observations and discussions about student learning to campus-level data and discussions.
4. Focus attention toward (a) lessons learned from existing data and assessment activities and (b) actions taken to improve student learning.
5. Integrate the multiple streams of assessment information on campus to produce a more holistic understanding and deeper conversation about student learning at multiple levels of the institution.

The success of the initiative began with the reiteration of assessment of student learning as a campus value and a priority by the current University leadership. This message was conveyed through campus-wide communications, messaging from colleges, as well as through our conversations at five bi-annual assessment retreats since 2013. Participation at the assessment retreats was made up of the campus executive and steering committees (refer to #6 below) on assessment, including the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

The creation of a flexible assessment reporting process allowed for program/collegiate flexibility, yet maintained a continuous improvement process to help guide collective actions for curricular change, development of enhanced learning opportunities for students, improvement of teaching, and the provision of more effective academic support services. The initiative hinged on faculty and program support and, to date, the level of participation and the positive attitudes expressed have exceeded expectations. We had nearly all of our undergraduate programs submit an assessment report documenting their assessment process for the AY 2014-15 (up from 93% in AY 2013-14), which surpassed our original goal of having 80% of programs participating by this time.

The bi-annual assessment retreats allowed colleges to update the campus steering committee on their progress made in assessing student learning, and what changes they have made based on their findings. Results from other university-wide assessments were shared from the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey, as well as from the Writing-Enriched Curriculum (WEC); the retreats also allowed for discussions regarding the assessment process itself. Small changes were made to the assessment report template based on feedback received at the retreat. The retreats allowed for rich, campus-wide conversations around improvement; and served as a mechanism to promote similar conversations within each college and academic program.

We feel it is important to note that our efforts will not end with the conclusion of the quality initiative. We realize that work remains to continue to enhance the culture of assessment on campus by moving the assessment process along the spectrum from a compliance activity to one of improvement. Moving forward, additional emphases will be placed on working with undergraduate programs to utilize multiple evidence sources, as well as on encouraging more programs to share and discuss their assessment findings at regular program/departamental meetings. Faculty are the experts in their field, and there should be conversations around what their students are, or are not, learning; and what instructional and/or curricular changes should happen to foster the best learning experiences for our students.

## **Scope and Impact of the Initiative**

2. *Explain in more detail what has been accomplished in the Quality Initiative in relation to its purposes and goals. (If applicable, explain the initiative's hypotheses and findings.)*

We are pleased to report that the University has made tremendous progress on a majority of the tasks we set out to do in our Quality Initiative proposal: *Connecting the dots of Undergraduate Student Learning Assessment*.

The University has a long history of commitment to assessing student learning. For example, the Council for Education and Student Learning, established in 2004 and continued until its replacement in 2011, created guidelines for programs and engaged with pilot programs. The Center for Teaching and Learning, the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, the University's assessment coordinator, and others at that time encouraged best assessment of student learning practices. A major accomplishment of that period was the 2007 University Senate adoption, after much discussion, of seven undergraduate student learning outcomes (SLOs) and seven undergraduate student development outcomes (SDOs). The SLOs and SDOs were communicated to faculty, staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders through messages and a framework (see attachment) connecting the outcomes to the undergraduate experience. The University has continued to require—through its approval procedures and electronic course and degree program inventory tools known as ECAS and PCAS—all academic programs and courses to show which outcomes are addressed and where in each program curriculum.

In 2012, Provost Karen Hanson assumed her role as chief academic officer and led an evaluation of current assessment of student learning efforts. Concluding that there were opportunities to build on the present efforts, Provost Hanson charged the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education and the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education to lead teams that would establish more consistent assessment work across all departments, provide stronger central leadership, simplify expectations, and connect the many streams of assessment data to better inform academic planning. The University has shown continued commitment to this priority, and we continue to build on that commitment through several initiatives, including hosting retreats, the creation and adoption of a revised assessment process, and the implementation of an electronic assessment management system.

We began hosting bi-annual assessment retreats beginning in June 2013. At this initial retreat, the first draft of our assessment process, including the *Annual Progress Report (APR)*, was presented to the group for discussion. The APR was developed based on expectations from accrediting bodies, previous work by the director of undergraduate assessment at his previous institution, and feedback solicited from undergraduate associate deans. It was designed to provide a common framework to report assessment findings, yet be flexible enough to apply broadly to our diverse academic programs. The APR was then edited based on feedback received from the first retreat, and implemented beginning with the 2013-14 academic year (see attachment). The APR consists of three main sections:

1. Identify the student learning outcome assessed, where it was assessed (class, event, practicum, etc.), who and how many were assessed, and how you assessed the outcome;
2. What were the results of the outcome, and what percentage demonstrated results of below proficient, proficient, and above proficient (according to your standards); and
3. How did you share and discuss the results within your program, and what actions and/or revisions do you plan on making, if applicable.

The following two assessment retreats in 2014 (January and June) allowed for the sharing of assessment best practices from all of our undergraduate-serving colleges. These retreats allowed for colleagues from our diverse academic colleges to learn from one another. Not all colleges adopted the same approach to assess student learning. Some colleges had their academic programs identify an assessment point-person, and collected assessment results from the faculty within their respective program; other colleges took a more holistic approach due to the nature of how their curriculum was structured or for specialized accreditation standards; and another

elected to gain student input around the learning outcomes to see if students were aware of the learning outcomes, and to determine how well the outcomes were being introduced and addressed within their curriculum.

The two retreats that we have completed thus far in 2015 (January and June) have shifted from collegiate updates and discussion of the process to interpretation of results, findings, and comparing results among the colleges. In an effort to assist in the synthesis and dissemination of data, the Director of Undergraduate Assessment, and staff from the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Undergraduate Education compiled data from the APRs, the SERU survey, and an “Outcomes” survey in one of our colleges.

All participants at the June 2015 retreat received assessment of student learning data (from the APR and the SERU) at the college and/or University-level. The University-level reports were an aggregate of all the APR data for each of the seven student learning outcomes (7 reports), and an aggregate of questions from the SERU survey aligned to each student learning outcome (7 reports). The representatives from the colleges received the University-level reports, as well as customized reports from the APRs and SERU for their respective programs within their college. All participants received these reports in advance of the retreat to allow time for thorough review, and a majority of the time at the retreat was discussion and going through the reports outcome-by-outcome.

An additional retreat is scheduled for September 16, 2015, as a culminating event for the previous two-and-a-half years leading up to our reaffirmation of accreditation site visit (scheduled for October 26-27, 2015). At that retreat, we plan to discuss four core questions:

1. What has worked, and what has not worked, with the current process of assessing student learning?
2. What have been your major findings from the current assessment process?
3. Do the seven University Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes remain applicable to today’s students and our current teachings?
4. In what direction would you like assessment of student learning to move for the University post HLC site visit?

The September meeting will allow us to assess the current assessment process, and assist us in setting the direction moving forward. It is important to note that Provost Hanson has participated in each of these retreats; her presence demonstrates the commitment that senior leadership, and the University, is making to the value of assessment of student learning.

During this time, the University began a system-wide discussion on an electronic tool to assist in the management and alignment of various assessment activities across the university to multiple functions, including assessment of student learning, academic program review, and strategic planning. We will further describe this tool in #4 below.

3. *Evaluate the impact of the initiative, including any changes in processes, policies, technology, curricula, programs, student learning and success that are now in place in consequence of the initiative.*

The Quality Initiative has brought together several key activities that focus on undergraduate education, including the assessment process, the SERU survey, as well as the Writing-Enriched Curriculum. Since 2007, the University’s pioneering Writing-Enriched Curriculum program (WEC) has been providing an intradisciplinary complement to the interdisciplinary writing across the curriculum programming. Need for this localized approach was articulated between 2001 and 2006 by faculty and instructors participating in the Faculty Writing Consultant program and by focus groups convened as part of the 2006 Strategic Positioning effort. Both of these assessments yielded evidence of confusion about the role of writing instruction in major programs, about the intended

relationship between courses that were and were not designated as writing-intensive (WI) courses. Participants in focus groups repeatedly voiced the perception that writing instruction and content instruction constituted separate and frequently conflicting areas of instruction. The persistence of this perception, and the confusion it triggered, indicated that the University's approach to integrating writing instruction into undergraduate programs by way of its WI course requirement was yielding uneven and limited results.

The WEC model addresses these concerns through a flexible, faculty-driven approach. It is based on the beliefs that (1) writing can be flexibly defined as an articulation of thinking, an act of choosing among an array of modes or forms, only some of which involve words; (2) writing ability is continually developed rather than mastered; (3) because writing is instrumental to learning, it follows that writing instruction is the shared responsibility of content experts in all academic disciplines; (4) the incorporation of writing into content instruction can be most meaningfully achieved when those who teach are provided multiple opportunities to articulate, interrogate, and communicate their assumptions and expectations; (5) infusing writing instruction into their teaching requires support. In order to support the undergraduate assessment activity, the WEC project established a "rating" initiative where the results of students' writing are rated by experts before and after the WEC model is applied. This has provided rich assessment data that documents the improvement of students' writing and allows for faculty discussion on where further improvement is needed.

The assessment of our WEC model is customized to each academic degree/college, making it more difficult to draw summary results. WEC results were not directly included as part of our analyses during our 2015 retreat, but we encourage degree programs to align writing criteria to either programmatic or the University's student learning outcomes for assessment purposes.

During this time, the Office of Institutional Research developed factor scores from groups of questions from the SERU survey aligned to the seven University student learning outcomes. This allowed for the creation of a student learning outcomes report that shows collegiate/program results compared to the University average on each student learning outcome.

By connecting the dots, programs/colleges can combine multiple sources of evidence (APR, SERU, WEC) to shape their assessment of student learning story. The impact of the initiative also has led to an increased awareness of assessment, and further enhanced a culture of assessment at the University. We began a centralized and coordinated effort and launched the annual APR process, and implemented a new electronic assessment management system system-wide (see #4 for additional information on our new electronic system).

With our new electronic system in place, we have documented a multitude of ways programs share and discuss assessment results within their respective programs, and how they are utilizing those results to make revisions to enhance the student experience on our campus. A few examples that have been pulled from the electronic system include:

- "XXX and BS Curriculum Committees (regular and adjunct faculty, program director, student representatives, student services advisor) meet seven times/semester. The joint Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (comprised of BS+BDA curriculum committee members) meets four times per semester. Now that we have two years of SLO data, we can dedicate agenda time to when, where and how our programs could or should improve SLO performance. Some of the issues that can be addressed this coming year are how to use the SLOs more effectively, which, if any additional SLOs, we should include next year, which courses should be used to assess which SLO, what should we consider at, above and below proficiency, and whether we are seeing grade inflation in some courses."
- "In the second year of this formal process, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee moved to a more specific issue: the concern among many instructors of upper-division XXXX courses that students are often not prepared to communicate effectively, especially in writing, in the language of mathematics. XXXX 3283W is the main writing-intensive course most often taken by XXX majors, but there are constraints preventing explicit writing instruction from being concentrated in this course. For one, the topical goals of the course – sequences and series – are specialized enough that a more general treatment of mathematical writing would be difficult. Second, XXXX 3283W is a heavily subscribed course, and direct

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- writing instruction falls primarily to graduate TAs. We collected many suggestions for addressing writing issues, and we will explore in the next academic year the possibility of implementing them: a) adopting a Writing-enriched Curriculum, as administered by the Office for Undergraduate Education; b) encouraging the development of freshman seminars on mathematical exploration; c) creating Math Club sessions on mathematical writing; d) designing short courses, for example in May term; or e) creating a rotating set of topics courses, using a model similar to one implemented at MIT.”
- “Instructors discuss the results collectively, with a more formal discussion and planning for pedagogical changes or assessments as needed at the faculty retreat. Our department has an undergraduate teaching and curriculum committee, composed of three core faculty, which meet once a term to review issues related to undergraduate teaching and make recommendations to the core faculty, including a discussion of SLOs.”
  - “XXX used a three part strategy. One, faculty met during a full faculty meeting to discuss the SLO assessment exercise and refine our existing strategy. Two, instructors met with the director of undergraduate studies at the end of the semester to discuss the assessment results. Three, the department chair shared a summary of this discussion with other faculty, and the director of undergraduate studies held a faculty meeting to discuss the results with faculty.”
  - “The exam essay questions were a great way to assess communicating effectively through writing, but in the future I will likely also include in-class presentations to assess ‘communicates effectively’ orally, since most of the students could write well, but not all spoke up in class.”
  - In 15-16, we are focusing on creating meaning from the interrelationship of WEC and the two previous year’s of assessment data from 1001, 3001W, 3801, and 3901/2/3W with the goal of improving students’ mastery of psychological concepts through writing assignments.
  - The Director of Individualized Degrees will be added to the Undergraduate Programs Assessment Committee effective Fall 2015. In addition, at the semiannual XXXX faculty meetings beginning in Fall 2015 the Faculty Directors, along with the Director of Undergraduate Programs and the Director of XXXX, will facilitate presentations and discussions designed to enhance faculty members’ understanding of the SLOs and the importance of assessing them, as well as how their instructional and assessment techniques can be improved. These presentations will be based upon a comparison of data from the first and second years of the project, since the same courses and instructors were assessed, for the most part, both years. The instructors who did participate in the SLO assessment project will be called upon to provide insight and advice to instructors who have not yet engaged but will be engaging in the assessment process in the future.

4. *Explain any new tools, data, or other information that have resulted from the initiative to date.*

The University is moving toward the ability to create enhanced student learning analytics to discover more about the student learning experiences on campus. We currently track a great deal of information on our students and their academic progress and performance, including a locally-developed, campus-wide advising support tool, APLUS, that provides alerts to academic advisors in real time about issues impacting student persistence and progression and supports rich communication between students and advisors. The U of M also developed a Student Degree Progress platform that regularly measures the progress of students in completing the specific requirements of their degree programs and provides outreach to students who are off track. Now, with our recently-established electronic, centralized university assessment management system, we can ascertain how well our students are achieving the University’s undergraduate student learning outcomes. We see this as a powerful tool, as it will allow faculty/staff, programs, colleges, and the University the information that they need to have conversations to enhance the student learning experience. More detail on this new system, Campus Labs, is provided below.

With an increased effort in accountability and transparency, the University of Minnesota made a financial commitment to purchase a system-wide license at the end of 2014 for an electronic assessment management system by Higher One, Inc., called Campus Labs. The implementation of Campus Labs has allowed us to centralize and coordinate various efforts across the campus, as well as for the system campuses, in the areas of assessment of student learning, academic program review, strategic planning, and related activities. The system

assists us with the ability to seamlessly create robust student learning analytical reports from a multitude of levels, including at the course, program, department, college, and University.

In addition to adopting several of their products, the University has become a strategic partner with Campus Labs to further develop their products. Since the summer of 2015, we have worked with the vendor to develop an integration point with our Learning Management Systems (LMS), updates and enhancements to their electronic rubrics tool, and enhanced the way the system collects and reports student learning outcomes data with a more refreshed, dashboard-type report view. Integrating with our LMS (Moodle) eliminates the need for faculty to fill out a form or submit their assessment findings to a point-person within their program; the results can be automatically pushed to their program's assessment report housed in Campus Labs. We still expect that faculty members and/or programs will evaluate what the assessment is telling them, and whether or not they did, or plan to, make any revisions.

We foresee this system growing throughout a multitude of areas across campus because of its user-friendly interface and ability to create customized templates that align to our institution's mission. We also continue to have conversations with the vendor on ways to continue to enhance their platforms, including in the areas of competency-based education and individual student exposure of each student learning outcome, including the results of how well s/he met that particular outcome throughout their assessed courses while at the University.

The University also enhanced existing tools and programs to support the assessment process. The University of Minnesota was a founding member of the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) AAU Consortium, and manages and administers the survey for AAU institutions. The University has administered the SERU survey in 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. In addition to the wealth of data the SERU survey provides the University around student engagement, satisfaction, and experiences, the University undertook a project under the direction of its Director of Institutional Assessment to map questions on the survey to the seven institutional learning outcomes. Since the SERU survey is sent to all undergraduate students at the University, it provides rich program-level information on student perceptions of their learning that complements the data submitted in through the APR process. The Office of Institutional Research has created reports summarizing the responses on SLO-linked survey items for colleges and programs, and additional custom reports were created to support discussion at the summer 2015 assessment retreat. In addition, analyses have been conducted using SERU data to document and support the Writing Enriched Curriculum (WEC) project, which also provided evidence to supplement the assessment retreat conversation.

*5. Describe the biggest challenges and opportunities encountered in implementing the initiative.*

The initiative has allowed us the opportunity to promote the assessment of student learning from the forefront, with messaging coming from various levels, including the Provost and academic colleges. It has fostered rich, meaningful conversations at all levels; from degree programs to campus-wide, with an emphasis on improving student learning and the student experience on campus.

Over the past year, there have been several University Senate, Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC), and Senate Committee on Education Policy (SCEP) discussions on the topic of the University's student learning outcomes and assessment process. Provost Hanson, Vice Provost McMaster, as well as members from the Executive Committee, have appeared before all of these groups to respond to questions and to stress the importance of our assessment process to improving student learning. We anticipate ongoing conversations around this topic, and we will discuss future activities at our assessment summit in mid-September. Additionally, we will be open to further discussions as we look to the future and prepare for our 2019-20 Assurance Review.

Over the past ten years the University of Minnesota has worked diligently to establish a culture of assessment at the undergraduate level. For some faculty and instructors this felt new. Some felt they already assessed their

courses through the grading process, while others felt this was yet another unfunded mandate passed down from central administration. Still other faculty already had rich assessment plans in place and fully understood the importance of regular assessment and feedback. By working closely with the colleges, and by allowing flexibility, we have made significant progress in building a shared “assessment” culture”. We recognize that there are a few faculty/programs on campus that do not agree with a focus on the University’s seven student learning outcomes, and we have encouraged, and worked with those faculty and programs to establish program-specific student learning outcomes particular to what they want their students to be able to know and do upon graduation. Once these programs have written their program-specific outcomes, we refer back to the University outcomes to see if the program outcomes can align to any of the University outcomes. In most cases, the program outcome does align with a University outcome. This is another example of how we have developed a flexible process to meet the needs of our diverse academic programs.

We also want to recognize that even though nearly all of our undergraduate programs submitted an APR this past academic year, the quality and quantity of information within the reports varies. We will continue to promote the purpose and meaning of assessing student learning, the sharing and discussing of results at faculty and campus-wide meetings, and the use of assessment findings to improve student learning.

We also need to spend additional time and resources on how we can better incorporate assessment of student learning into areas of strategic planning and academic program review. Our initial focus was on assessment of the University’s student learning outcomes, and now that we have buy-in from nearly all undergraduate academic programs, we can devote additional time linking to other efforts.

### **Commitment to and Engagement in the Quality Initiative**

6. *Describe the individuals and groups involved in the initiative and their perceptions of its worth and impact.*

A multitude of people have been involved in this initiative, both directly and indirectly. It started with the leadership of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Karen Hanson, and the delegation of moving the initiative forward to the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education, Robert McMaster. Note, the Provost remains a visible participant and supporter. Dr. McMaster has established an Executive Team, which includes himself, the Director of Undergraduate Assessment, the Director of Institutional Assessment, the Director of Undergraduate Analytics, the Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, and the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Senior Vice President and Provost. This group meets several times a month to manage aspects of the initiative, including timeline, communications, process details, and general training and development objectives.

In addition to the Executive Team, a Campus Steering Committee was also established. This group is composed of the Executive Team, each college’s associate dean for undergraduate education, and other undergraduate education leaders. These individuals are the University’s most senior leaders for undergraduate education, who have the authority and responsibility for the University’s undergraduate programs. This group includes the leaders who are driving the assessment conversations in each of the colleges and who engage with department/program faculty. This group will also discuss campus-wide measures in combination with Annual Progress Reports to draw conclusions and set the University’s undergraduate agenda.

Key to these campus-level conversations is the analysis performed by University staff prior to the conversations. These staff includes analysts in the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Undergraduate Education who packages the various streams of information into findings and groups of findings organized around the University’s seven Student Learning Outcomes. The prepared analyses and reports have been shared with both the Steering and Executive committees for continued discussions around student learning.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, are the faculty/staff and directors of undergraduate studies within each of the undergraduate academic programs who have played a key role in this process. As indicated, we have been pleasantly surprised with the level of program participation in this process. We could not have accomplished what we have done without the support of these individuals.

7. *Describe the most important points that have been learned by those involved in the initiative.*

University leaders have made several observations and learned many lessons as a result of this initiative. As mentioned in the proposal and elsewhere, the University has a long history of engaging with assessment of student learning, including several specific University-wide efforts. This latest effort, however, seems to have been more productive and has laid a foundation for future conversations more successfully than efforts in the past. Upon reflection, leaders identified six themes that help explain why.

**1. Leadership was visible from the top leaders;**

While certainly a campus priority, past efforts delegated execution, leadership, and communication to leaders at within offices reporting to senior leaders. We were purposeful in showing the directive coming directly from the Provost. This included campus-wide emails and the Provost's attendance at assessment retreats and meetings of the associate deans. The project was led by the vice provost and dean of undergraduate education. While staff executed much of the work and also provided leadership, the vice provost was the most prominent face associated with leading the effort.

**2. This effort focused more on authentic conversations that lead to improvement (rather than simply accountability);**

Past efforts were stymied by fear that findings could be used to harm a program. As a result, some faculty associated with assessing learning could either refuse to engage or, even more likely, be inclined to identify only data that show successes. While being able to show accountability to constituents is a potential outcome from this activity, the primary object was to learn about our students' level of learning. Establishing relationships with the faculty was important, in order for them to trust that this was a safe activity.

**3. Process and rules were flexible;**

In contrast to some past efforts that tried to prescribe standard process for all units, the current effort recognized the diversity of programs and allowed for some flexibility. The seven student learning outcomes were a general skeleton or framework for the units, but the units were given great latitude for interpreting, aligning, and measuring those outcomes. We expect that, moving forward, additional programs will move to a more customized and disciplinary-specific set of outcomes while still aligning these to the University seven outcomes.

**4. Processes for assessment of student learning were set up to be routinized on a repeating cycle;**

Past efforts tended to be episodic. This effort focuses on establishing an annual cycle that asks program faculty to assess, discuss, and report lessons learned to leaders. The annual calendar also includes a mid-year and end-of-the cycle retreat to discuss institutional-level findings as well as the effectiveness of the current assessment process.

**5. Data were intended to inform conversations at the program and institutional levels;**

This initiative asked program faculty to assess the seven student learning outcomes more formally and engage in more authentic conversations. Leadership at the University level also wanted to benefit from that learning and to compare finding from the faculty with findings from other sources. Triangulated data from multiple instruments helps the leaders consider findings with more confidence.

**6. Expectations were more realistic and doable, respectful of faculty time, and allowed for increased engagement with successive cycles.**

When doing assessment work, it is easy for leaders to become so focused on acquiring great data and establishing perfect administration that discussing and acting on the information becomes an afterthought. A theme in this

recent effort was to get faculty and leaders discussing their findings, even if their data were not as solid yet as they'd like. We set out to make this effort one that would add value to the organization, but also one that could be reasonably implemented without burdening already-stretched faculty. It is our belief that by setting up a regular cycle of review, faculty will consider how better to align outcomes with data each new cycle.

### **Resource Provision**

8. *Explain the human, financial, physical, and technological resources that have supported the initiative.*

The University has been committed to this initiative, and has provided the resources necessary since the proposal of the project in early 2014. The Director of Undergraduate Assessment has served as a campus-wide resource on undergraduate assessment, and has worked with faculty, staff, and administrators in developing, implementing, and coordinating assessment efforts of undergraduate student learning outcomes across the student experience, both inside and outside of the classroom. In addition, senior staff time has been provided from the office of Institutional Research, the Provost's Office, the Office of Undergraduate Education, and collegiate associate deans.

The Director of Undergraduate Assessment began training interested colleges/programs on the new electronic system beginning in January 2015. We will continue to bring additional undergraduate programs into the system this coming academic year. We also are working with other areas of the institution to bring them into the system as well, including the Graduate School, Office of Student Affairs and Office for Equity and Diversity. We foresee this system growing throughout a multitude of areas across campus because of its user-friendly interface, and the ability to create customized templates that align to our institution's mission.

The initiative also leveraged the existing resources of the University's Electronic Course Approval System (ECAS), where new and revised courses note which student learning outcomes are addressed. ; the Writing Enriched Curriculum (WEC) program, whose coordinator works with departments across campus to infuse writing into their curriculum in discipline-specific forms and assess the quality of that work; and the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey, which provides both broad and program-level evidence of student perceptions of their learning, along with a wealth of data on their experiences at the institution. Each of these existing efforts provided information to complement and support the Annual Progress Report (APR) process and the assessment retreat discussions. They also provided models for engaging colleges, departments, and faculty in reflection and improvement that helped builds trust and engagement for the assessment effort.

### **Plans for the Future (Optional)**

9. *Describe plans for ongoing work or goals yet to be accomplished related to the initiative.*

It is important to note that our work in the assessment of student learning area will never be completed. As mentioned above, we will continue to strive for a shift from compliance to accountability, and the incorporation of assessment activities into additional functions of the University.

We touch on this in several points above, but we will continue to have conversations around assessment of student learning since it is an ever-evolving process. With our upcoming assessment summit in mid-September, we will carry this message forward by looking at what we have done, and ways to improve upon this process moving forward. We plan to continue to have bi-annual assessment retreats to discuss findings and ways to improve upon the assessment process.

Programs and colleges have also set out to improve upon their assessment process. The college that first looked at the student perception and knowledge of the learning outcomes is now transitioning to a more program-based assessment model. They are working with the faculty within their programs to identify outcomes addressed

within their courses, then identifying current assignments, exams, presentations, etc. that could be used for assessment purposes. The information collected will then be entered into Campus Labs where a report can be generated that provides assessment results within the course and program. These results can then be shared with other faculty within the program for a discussion, and reflection on what the results are showing.

Another example of ongoing work is the number of programs that have realized the importance, and need for, creating program-specific student learning outcomes that apply specifically to their major because they find the University learning outcomes too vague. Through the creation of program-specific learning outcomes statements, students will know exactly what they will be able to know and do upon graduating from the program. Program outcomes can then be aligned to the University outcomes.

*10. Describe any practices or artifacts from the initiative that other institutions might find meaningful or useful and please indicate if you would be willing to share this information.*

Two pieces that we reference in #2 above may be useful at other institutions. We have attached a copy of our Annual Progress report (APR), and our framework of connecting the outcomes to the undergraduate experience that we communicate to faculty, staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders.

We also have become a national model for the writing-enriched curriculum approach derived from writing across the curriculum. The Director of WEC has promoted this model at multiple institutions across the country (and internationally), and the U of M recently held the national conference on this topic. We stand ready to support other institutions interested in developing WEC-based models.

The U of M work around SERU and the unique assessment questions in SERU have been shared with our SERU colleagues, and we continue to develop new ways to measure this. This represents a true partnership with our peers in the development, testing, and implementation of assessment measures with this survey instrument.

# ATTACHMENT 1

## **Annual Progress Report**

### **on Assessment of Student Learning for Undergraduate Programs**

*The purpose of the Annual Progress Report (APR) of Student Learning Assessment is to provide a continuous improvement process through meaningful assessment of student learning. Findings and discussions should guide collective actions for curricular change, better learning opportunities for students, improvement of teaching, and more effective academic support services.*

#### **Introduction**

**Academic year:**

**Department/Program:**

**Degree program(s):**

**Person(s) preparing report:**

**Date submitted:**

#### **I. Student learning Outcomes**

- A) List current SLOs for the major degree program assessed during the academic year.
- B) Identify the link, if applicable, between your departmental/program outcomes and the University's Undergraduate Learning Outcomes.

#### **II. Assessment Strategies for each SLO that was assessed for this annual report.** ( please describe):

- A) The measures used (at least one direct measure must be used for **each** student learning outcome).
- B) Which and how many students were assessed and when.
- C) Establish and describe the proficiency levels (*below, at, and above*) for expected student achievement for **each** SLO.

#### **III. Results for Each SLO Assessed**

- A) What percentage of your students demonstrate below, at, and above proficiency?
- B) What does this tell you about student learning for **each** student learning outcome assessed (Did the student's meet your expectations? Why or why not?)

#### **IV. Faculty Review of the Assessment Results**

- A) Describe the process by which program faculty reviewed and discussed the results.

#### **V. Actions or Revision**

- A) What actions and/or revisions, if any, will be implemented based on your findings (i.e. curricular changes, change in courses used to assess, add new assessment measure, implementation of a rubric, etc.)?

# THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

A DISTINCTIVE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP FACILITATED BY FACULTY AND STAFF

## STUDENT

Previous Experiences / Academic Achievements / Strengths

- Major and Minor
- Undergraduate Writing
- Undergraduate Research
- Freshman Seminars
- Liberal Education
- Community Engagement
- Student Activities and Leadership
- Internships, Co-ops, and Career Exploration
- Student Employment
- Building on Strengths
- Learning Abroad

ACADEMIC

EXPERIENTIAL

## EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

### STUDENT DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

AS THEY PROGRESS TOWARD THEIR DEGREE, STUDENTS WILL DEVELOP AND DEMONSTRATE:

- Responsibility and Accountability
- Independence and Interdependence
- Goal Orientation
- Self Awareness
- Resilience
- Appreciation of Differences
- Tolerance of Ambiguity

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

AT THE TIME OF RECEIVING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE, STUDENTS:

- Can identify, define, and solve problems
- Can locate and critically evaluate information
- Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry
- Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies
- Can communicate effectively
- Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines
- Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and lifelong learning

**RESULTING IN GRADUATES WHO ARE HIGHLY MOTIVATED LIFELONG LEARNERS, LEADERS, AND GLOBAL CITIZENS.**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**Driven to Discover<sup>SM</sup>**